

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 06126 101757Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 SSO-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MILI, PGOV, US, IS
SUBJECT: ARMS PACKAGE COMPROMISE-ISRAELI REACTION

BEGIN UNCLAS

1. MOST RECENT SPECULATION IN THE ISRAELI PRESS ON THE TYPE
OF COMPROMISE ON THE PLANE PACKAGE WHICH WILL EMERGE IN THE
US HAS BEEN BY WASHINGTON BASED CORRESPONDENTS. FOR EXAMPLE,
BLITZER IN THE MAY 10 JERUSALEM POST REPORTED THAT THE "CARTER
ADMINISTRATION HAS INDICATED A READINESS TO PROVIDE ISRAEL
WITH AN ADDITIONAL 20 F-15S AND AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF F-16S
ABOVE THE ORIGINAL PACKAGE...AND THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS ASSURED
THE US THAT IT WOULD NOT PURCHASE ANY ADDITIONAL COMBAT AIR-
CRAFT FROM FRANCE OR ANY OTHER SOURCE WHILE...RECEIVING THE
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 06126 101757Z

F-15S." BLITZER ALSO REPORTED THAT UNDERSECRETARY CHRISTOPHER
WAS ASKED BY MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE "THAT THE COMPRO-
MISE ALSO INCLUDE AN ADDITIONAL
1.7 BILLION DOLLARS IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL TO HELP
PAY FOR THE EXTRA F-15S AND F-16S. BUT THERE WAS NO INDICATION
WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD GO ALONG WITH THE REQUEST."
BLITZER FELT THAT THE COMPROMISE (THE INCREASE TO ISRAEL AND

RESTRICTIONS ON SAUDI ARABIA) "SEEM TO ASSURE PASSAGE OF THE FULL PACKAGE." HE QUOTED WELL-PLACED CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES CLOSE TO THE ADMINISTRATION WHO SAID CARTER WILL AGREE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PLANES TO ISRAEL IN THE FORM OF A SEPARATE PROPOSAL TO CONGRESS.

2. TYPICAL OF ISRAELI REACTION IS MARCUS' REPORT IN MAY 10 HAARETZ THAT "EVEN IF CARTER AGREES TO THE COMPROMISE, IT WILL BE REGARDED BY AMERICAN OBSERVERS AS A DEFEAT FOR THE ISRAELI LOBBY...AS IT IS STILL A CUT FROM AN EARLIER OFFER." THIS ARTICLE EXPRESSES A FEAR WHICH HAS BEEN THE LEITMOTIF OF THE ISRAELI PRESS- THAT THE PRINCIPLE AND THE PRECEDENT ESTABLISHED IS THE REAL DANGER AND WILL LEAD TO THE US BECOMING THE CHIEF SUPPLIER OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS TO THE ARAB STATES.

3. MAARIV CLAIMED IN A MAY 9 EDITORIAL THAT THE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL WOULD PROBABLY BE AGREED TO BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, BUT SAID THAT "IT IS HARDLY LIKELY TO AROUSE ENTHUSIASM OF JERUSALEM CIRCLES." THE ARTICLE ADDED AS CAVEAT THAT "SINCE THE DELIVERY OF PLANES IN QUESTION IS SUPPOSED TO OCCUR IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, ONE WONDERS HOW GOOD A GUARANTEE IS GIVEN BY A GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD NO LONGER BE IN POWER WHEN THE TIME COMES. CARTER AND HIS AIDES HAVE ALREADY GIVEN THE ANSWER AND IT IS NOT VERY REASSURING...THE TRIANGULAR DEAL WILL HAVE BEEN APPROVED WITHOUT DEALY, WHILE THE NEW UNDERTAKING TOWARDS ISRAEL REMAINS TO BE REALIZED SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE, IF CARTER IS STILL IN POWER, AND IF HE DOES NOT CHANGE HIS MIND OR DECIDE TO USE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 06126 101757Z

AIRCRAFT SUPPLY AS POLITICAL PRESSURE." END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. COMMENT: BEGIN LOU: ISRAELIS REMAIN FOR THE MOST PART SKEPTICAL THAT RESTRICTIONS CAN BE IMPOSED ON THE SAUDIS ONCE THE PLANES ARE IN THEIR HANDS. HOWEVER, SOME FORM OF COMPROMISE AS IS BEING DISCUSSED WOULD MAKE THE PILL EASIER TO SWALLOW. THERE SEEMS TO BE A GOOD DEAL OF RESIGNATION THAT ALL POSSIBLE HAS BEEN DONE ON THE ISRAELI SIDE BY PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN. THE LOCAL FOCUS MAY NOW RETURN TO THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, CRITICISM OF THE PRIME MINISTER FOR HIS HANDLING OF POLICY WHICH HAD ENABLED CARTER TO GET THE UPPER HAND WILL CONTINUE. BENZIMAN IN MAY 10 HAARETZ DESCRIBED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAS "HAVING PLACED A NEW NORM IN RELATIONS-ANY INJUSTICE AGAINST ISRAEL IS POSSIBLE IN THE NAME OF PURE AMERICAN INTERESTS." END COMMENT. END LOU.
LEWIS

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